



SOCIAL STUDIES

Lesson

Lesson

2

UNIT 3 – Family Types and Unions in the Caribbean Situations

Family Unions

INTRODUCTION

Now that you can identify family types from the previous lesson, you are better poised to grasp the concept of “family unions”.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- a) identify the type of arrangements by which couples unite to form family
- b) give a definition for the different forms of marriage



Further information can be obtained from:

- a. Modules in Social Studies – Ramsawack & Umraw – pg 36
- b. Study Guide – pgs 4 and 7

GETTING STARTED

What does Union mean?

“Union” describes the type of arrangement by which the couples unite to form a family.

Such unions are:

- i. legal marriage
- ii. common law or consensual union
- iii. visiting relationships

Couples unite to form a family through:

1. Legal Marriage. This union is characterized by a formal marriage that is either conducted with a religious ceremony or a legal ceremony. Persons under 18 who want to be married must have the consent of parents. A marriage ends when there is a divorce, an annulment of the marriage through court, or if there is an agreement to separate.
2. The Common Law Union. In this situation, a man and woman decide to live together as man and wife without a marriage ceremony. This arrangement is by mutual agreement and is therefore referred to as a consensual union.
3. The visiting relationship or “friending” relationship. Men and women share a sexual relationship but do not live together. Children may or may not be produced. A woman may go through several of these relationships in her life. This pattern is called “serial monogamy”.

Different Forms of Marriages

Which forms of marriage is practiced in your society?

A legal marriage takes different forms.

- i. Monogamy – the marriage of one man to one woman (as in the Caribbean, USA, Britain)
- ii. Polygamy – a generalized term for the custom of having more than one spouse at a time.
- iii. Polygyny – customs of one man having two or more wives (as in Muslim societies eg. Egypt)
- iv. Polyandry – custom of one woman having two or more husbands (as the Sinhalese of Sri Lanka)

It is important to note that the society one lives in, to a large extent determines the form of marriage that is practiced. In our Caribbean societies for example, if a man marries another woman while he is still married to his first wife, he would be considered a bigamist. Bigamy is a crime punishable by law.



ACTIVITY 1

1. In point form, list the possible advantages or disadvantages of a legal marriage.
2. Can you see any problems arising in a visiting relationship where a child resulted from the union? Name some of the problems.

FOLLOW UP

We will examine the practice of choosing partners from a defined group or from outside – in accordance with custom.



ACTIVITY 2

ASSIGNMENT

Here is your chance to become as knowledgeable as you wish – by searching the Internet or digging through the library for the following information:

Compare family life in two societies in the world where different forms of marriage can be seen.